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Friday, 31 July 2009

Breaking News: **Fighting Halts In Maiduguri**



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## Islamic Sect Leader, Yusuf, Killed, Followers Flee To Chad

By Paul Arhewe, George Akpayen, Rafiu Ajakaye (Lagos), Rotimi Akinwumi (Abuja), Bassey Inyang (Calabar), Abdulkareem Haruna (Maiduguri) and Hamidu Sabo (Katsina)

"Muhammed Yusuf has been killed. You can come and see his body at the Borno State police command headquarters," Police Public Relations Officer, Isa Azare, announced in Maiduguri on Thursday, five days after the man and his underlings in the Islamic sect called *Boko Haram* unleashed terror across four Northern states seeking to wipe out Western education.

His bullet-riddled body was later shown on television.

Police Commissioner, Christopher Dega, had earlier disclosed that Yusuf was arrested after being found hiding in a goat pen at his parents-in-law's house.

Yusuf's Deputy, Abubakar Shekau, was also killed along with about 200 followers, as they tried to flee Maiduguri.

The radical sect is known by several different names, including *Al-Sunna wal Jamaa*, or "Followers of Mohammed's Teachings," and *Boko Haram*, which means "Western education is sin."

Others refer to it as Taliban, although it has no known affiliation with Taliban fighters in Afghanistan.

After his arrest, Yusuf, 39, was first taken to the headquarters of the 21 Armoured Brigade where he was interrogated before he and about 400 of his followers were transferred to police headquarters.

The son of an Islamic Mualim, he was born in a remote village of Yunusufari. He later moved to Potiskum where he started his turbulent life as Tsangaya Quranic teacher. And then to Maiduguri where he joined and later abandoned the Shiite movement.

Soldiers had on Wednesday night launched an assault on the home of Yusuf, in which only women and children were found residing in the large compound.

Before his capitulation, Army Director of Public Relations, Brigadier-General Chris Olukolade, told reporters that "we have been mandated to clear the area and we are taking appropriate action. It is an internal security operation and is limited, not a full-scale war. The situation is completely under control, in Borno and other adjoining states."

With the battle entering the fifth day, the Jihadists surrendered in an indirect way, as some fled Maiduguri, disguising themselves by cutting off their hair and beards in a bid to beat security.

They are believed to have escaped through Gamboru and could be heading to Chad.

On the other hand, relief agencies now find it difficult to cater for the 4,000 displaced innocent persons, as their supplies can hardly provide for the people.

Police in Katsina also confirmed the killing of two members of *Boko Haram* in an exchange of gun fire.

Police Commissioner, Danazumi Doma, said 35 other Islamists were arrested, along with two armed robbers and five con men who had counterfeit currency notes in their possession.

"I want to place on record that 10 members of the Islamic sect were arrested in 2008 and transferred to force CID, Abuja for further action as their activities transcended Katsina, but later after being charged to the Chief Magistrate Court in Katsina, were discharged and acquitted under Section 159 of the penal code for using false evidence to procure conviction," he narrated.

However, League for Human Rights (LHR) on Thursday alleged the killing of innocent civilians.

LHR Director, Shamaki Gad Peter, told *The Associated Press* (AP) that rights workers saw the bodies of up to 20, and that many of such innocent people have been arrested.

On Thursday troops shelled then stormed the mosque and compound

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### Editorial/ Letters

#### EDITORIALS

#### On Police-Islamic Sect Clash In Bauchi

It is reprehensible that the President of the Federation and Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces, Alhaji Umaru Yar'Adua, did not shelve his three-day visit to Brazil. We consider this a grievous error of judgment.

### Op-Ed/ Comments

#### Heading Into The One Party State

Is all of this accidental? Or is there a link, binding contemporary movements in the political arena? It has been coming in thick and fast of recent.

#### There Was No Coup In Honduras

The point must be made unambiguously clear to the world, especially the Third World countries, that what took place in the early morning of Sunday, June 28, 2009 in Honduras was not a military coup d'etat.

On Thursday, troops shelled, then stormed the mosque and compound of the Islamists blamed for days of violence across the North, killing more than 100 of them in a raging gun battle.

The bodies of barefoot young men littered the streets of Maiduguri as soldiers conducted a house-to-house manhunt on the outskirts of the city.

Police said most of the dead were Islamic fighters.

Yusuf had escaped along with some followers but Shekau, his Deputy, was killed in Wednesday night's bombardment, according to Major General Saleh Maina, the Commander of the military operation.

Soldiers, under fire, shot their way into the mosque in Maiduguri on Wednesday and then raked those holed up inside with gunfire.

About 50 bodies were found inside the building and another 50 in the courtyard outside.

The Islamists, armed with homemade hunting rifles, bows and arrows and scimitars, were no match for the soldiers.

Another five corpses were found inside a large house near the mosque.

Men in Bauchi and in Maiduguri, meanwhile, started trimming and even shaving off their beards on Thursday, fearful the facial hair could make them targets for the forces who killed 43 sect members in a shoot-out in Potiskum on Wednesday.

Police in Bauchi have also reported 42 people killed, including two soldiers and a police officer, 67 hospitalised with serious injuries, and 157 men arrested.

In Kano, the local government on Wednesday bulldozed a mosque and the house of a sect leader, who officials said had fled with his family.

Police Public Relations Officer, Baba Mohammed, confirmed that more than 50 people have been arrested, with five shot and killed during the arrests.

At the heart of the violence is dire poverty and manoeuvring by political and religious leaders who manipulate ill-educated youths to further their aims.

Director of Defence Information, Colonel Mohammed Yerima, disclosed in Abuja on Thursday, that the security agencies had been aware of the extremists for years but refrained from confronting them because of the need to apply the rule of law.

"It has been ascertained that the group did not emerge just of recent. They have been in existence as far back as 1995 under different names such as *Ahlulsunna wal'jama'ah hijra*. Security agencies have over this period been monitoring and containing their activities even when they transmuted to other names but with the same doctrine of intolerance," he said.

Down South, Cross River on Thursday placed security agencies on alert in order to prevent the violence from spreading to the state.

Information Commissioner, Edet Okon Asim, said security personnel have been instructed to search vehicles and persons coming in from other states and neighbouring countries, so as to forestall the influx of Muslim hardliners.

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#### New Approach To Salvaging The Education Sector

It is no more news, Nigeria is witnessing systems deterioration. The most worrying and one that requires urgent, systematic and systemic attention, is the education sector.

#### Columnist

#### Conversation of an Angry man June 12: Mustapha Sings A Heroic Tune

The June 12 presidential election threw up its own share of heroes and villains. And there was a fine line of distinction between the two groups.

#### Candour's Niche Digital Revolution And Africa,s Media (2)

Aware of the challenges posed by the new era, magazines and newspapers are changing the ways they had hitherto approached journalism. Not only have they gone online, establishing their own websites, many in a bid to cultivate new audiences have resorted to blogging some beats or sections that ordinarily would have run in print.

#### Scruples ...Still On Anambra

A couple of weeks ago, I did a piece here on the nature of politics and governance in Anambra State and how these combine to determine the popularity rating of the State Governor

#### The Roundtable CBN Rate Cut: Matters Arising

Measures recently introduced by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to check a galloping interest rate included the following: capping deposit rate at 4%,

#### Speaking Out The Other Pains Of Strike (2)

This is the lot of the strike coordinators any time ASUU is on strike. We all love a life of comfort but we have chosen to fight for the truth we believe in.

#### Independent Opinion Poll

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